CUSTOMS OF WAR

Rules That Contending Armies Are Expected to Obey.

A GRIM CODE OF ETIQUETTE.

The Enemy May Be Starved to Death or Into Yielding by Stopping His Supplies, but His Food Must Not Be Poisoned—Prisoners of War.

War—that is, warfare between civilized nations—has its code of etiquette known as the customs of war, some of which are written, others tacitly agreed to, and these rules and regulations contending armies are supposed to regard as sacred and to obey them rigidly.

Obvious examples of fighting etiquette are the rules which protect the Red Cross flag of the ambulance and forbid the use of explosive or, within limits, expanding bullets.

Nominally a general may use any means in his power to bring his foe to subjection, but there is a well defined boundary line. A leader may cut off his enemy's food and water supplies. He may subject him to all the horrors of famine and thirst, but he must not poison his food or water.

Suppose a place is besieged and that outside the walls are wells which the besiegers cannot effectively hold and which the besieged can reach under cover of night. The besieger would be justified in sending parties to fill up the wells with earth and stones or to destroy them with dynamite. On the other hand, to pollute the wells with poison or to throw dead animals into them would be an infamy.

A "prisoner of war" has his rights. He may be asked to give his parole—i. e., to promise not to escape—but he must not be forced to give his parole and is not to be punished for refusing to do so. A prisoner on parole who attempts to escape is liable to be shot, either when escaping or if retaken alive.

An unparoled prisoner may also be shot while in the act of escaping, but if recaptured it would be murder to shoot him, and he should not be punished for his attempt, though he may be placed in more rigorous confinement.

A prisoner may be compelled to earn his "keep" by working at his trade, if he has one, or by doing work for his captors not of a purely military nature. Thus he may be ordered to assist in draining the camp in which he is a prisoner, but it would not be fair to put him to building fortifications.

The customs of war justify the employment of spies, but under certain rules. If a soldier voluntarily turns traitor the other side is entitled to make use of him, but it is not honorable to tempt a soldier to betray his own side.

If thus tempted a man may pretend to turn traitor and deceive the enemy with false information. On the other hand, voluntarily to go over to the enemy, pretending to be a traitor or deserter, would be dishonorable conduct—that is, if the pretended traitor is an officer or soldier.

A spy, of course, comprehends the hazardous nature of the mission he undertakes and is painfully aware of the fact that he carries his life in his hands, so to speak. Courageous and daring though he may be, the spy has no rights and is at all times liable to be shot or hanged at sight. Nowadays, though, he is usually given the benefit of a trial by court martial.

An officer or soldier, however, caught in the enemy's camp must not be treated as a spy, but as a prisoner of war, provided he is not disguised.

If a commander takes part in a charge or persistently exposes himself to fire he must take his chance of being shot, but in big affairs it is not the "game" to detail marksmen to try to pick off your opponent's general, though every effort may be made to capture him.

When a city or town is bombarded public buildings—unless used for defensive purposes—should be spared as far as possible. When a place is captured the victorious foe is entitled to seize art treasures, and so on, and to hold them to ransom. To injure or destroy them would be the act of a vandal.

When a country is invaded the invader can compel the inhabitants to supply him with food and other supplies and to act as guides, workmen and drivers.

A person who, not belonging to any recognized military force, takes up arms against an invader is liable to be shot like a dog when captured. Retaliation is sanctioned by the customs of war. It is military vengeance and takes place when an outrage committed on one side is avenged by the commission of a similar act on the other.

Thus an unjust execution of prisoners by the enemy may be followed by the execution of an equal number of prisoners held by the opponents, and this act of retaliation has been frequently enforced, even in recent years. —London Answers.

Doctoring a Doctor.

"I say, doctor, did you ever doctor another doctor?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well, tell me this. Does a doctor doctor a doctor the way the doctored doctor wants to be doctored, or does the doctor doing the doctoring doctor the other doctor in his own way?"—Kansas City Journal.

He is happiest, whether he be king or peasant, who finds peace in his own home.

HUSHED NIAGARA FALLS.

The Roar of Its Mighty Waters Once Stilled For a Day.

Only once in history has the roar of the mighty falls of Niagara been silenced. This startling phenomenon occurred on March 31, 1848. Early on that morning people living near the falls were surprised by a strange hush, as startling in effect as would be an unexpected and tremendous explosion in an ordinarily quiet community. Many persons thought they had been afflicted with deafness, and all were oppressed by a sensation of dread.

With the coming of light the amazed people comprehended the reason for the disquieting silence. Where they were used to seeing the great falls was a bare precipice down the face of which a few small and constantly diminishing streams trickled. Above the falls, instead of a rushing river, was only a naked channel, with insignificant brooks splashing among the rocks. All day long this astounding condition continued, and persons walked, dryshod from the Canadian side, along the very edge of the precipice, as far as Goat island, on the American side.

Early in the morning of April 1 the familiar thunder of the great cataract was again heard and has never since been silent, though similar conditions with like results, might prevail any spring. The winter of 1847-8 was one of extreme severity, and ice of unprecedented thickness formed on Lake Erie. When the breakup came toward the end of March a strong southeast wind was blowing, and the ice was piled into banks as large as icebergs.

Toward the night of March 30 the wind suddenly changed to the opposite direction, increased to a terrific gale and drove the ice into the entrance of Niagara river with such force that a huge dam was formed of such thickness and solidity as to be practically impenetrable and strong enough to hold back the great mass of water pressing against it. At last, in the early morning of April 1, the ice dam gave way under the tremendous pressure of restrained water, and the falls were once again one of the scenic wonders of the world.—New York Times.

YOUR SIXTH SENSE.

The Faculty That Enables You to Preserve Your Equilibrium.

It is almost a 1,000 to 1 bet that you don't know you have a sixth sense. But you have, nevertheless. It is known as the sense of equilibrium.

The sixth sense is located in the semicircular canals of the inner ear, and whenever a person is in danger of falling or losing his equilibrium a warning message is communicated to the brain. For years physiologists have been puzzled to know the function of these canals, because it was proved definitely that they had nothing to do with the sense of hearing or the proper working of the auricular organ. Thus they came to be considered as semicircular tubes, almost at right angles to one another and full of a clear liquid.

Scientists have discovered that these canals enable a person to tell what position he is in no matter whether he is blind or paralyzed. By some peculiar process not well understood they warn us when we are about to fall and give us the consciousness of being in any position assumed.

Steeplejacks and other workers on high buildings who finally lose their nerve and are afraid to go very far above the ground have lost part of their sense of equilibrium. Examinations by physicians in such instances have shown that their semicircular glands were diseased. It was largely by this means that the existence of a sixth sense was discovered.—New York World.

Crushing.

The English judge, Parry, in his book "What the Judge Saw" tells this story of a very masterful counsel who was not afraid to put even the bench in its place sometimes. On one occasion he was arguing a case when the judge asked for his authority for a certain statement.

"Usher," counsel called out in his most rasping voice, "go into the library and bring his lordship any elementary book on common law!"

Spider's Thread.

The thread spun by a spider is so excessively fine that a pound of it would be long enough to reach around the earth. It would take ten pounds of it to reach to the moon and over 3,000 pounds to stretch to the sun. But to get a thread long enough to reach the nearest star would require half a million tons.

Didn't Like Taxes.

Cases against George Washington appear here and there in old documents. No less than three claims were entered against him during the year 1787 to compel him to pay taxes. The humorous clerk, commenting on these actions, remarked, "George Washington, Esq., appeareth not to like taxes."

So Inquisitive.

Mamma (after her youngest's first day at school)—Now, Fritz, what did you do in school today? Fritz—Well, such curious people! First the teacher asks me what we did at home, and now you come and ask what we have done in school!—Fliegende Blatter.

A Boomerang.

Mrs. Hiram Offen—I'm afraid you won't do. As nearly as I can find out you have worked in six or seven places during the past year. Miss Brady—Well, an' how manny girls has yerself had in the same toime? No, less, I'm thinkin'.—Boston Transcript.

THE PRESIDENT'S MAIL.

How the Great Mass of Correspondence Is Handled Daily.

The president's mail is of such proportions that he cannot, like the business man, read all his letters as a part of the morning's routine. By a carefully developed system, however, the contents of the White House mail are in substance laid before him each day.

The work of doing this falls upon a corps of confidential clerks, who open the letters and give them a first reading. Then they are carefully sorted. Many of them, of course, need not go to the president at all, since they are simply recommendations for office. These, after courteous acknowledgment, are referred to the proper departments and placed on file until they may be taken up for consideration.

Many of the president's letters are purely formal or contain requests for something which cannot be granted. These the clerks answer and the president's secretary signs. The requests for charity are so many that a special "form" has been drawn up for answering them.

Such communications as the president ought to see are carefully brief—that is, a slip is pinned at the top of each letter, and on this is a typewritten synopsis of its contents, telling who the writer is and what he has to present. Frequently the president is sufficiently interested by the brief to cause him to read the whole letter. Sometimes the communication is referred to a cabinet officer, in which case the slip is retained at the White House and filed.

When a large number of persons write on the same subject the letters are bunched and the brief at the top gives the names of those who present one argument and in another list the persons who offer a different view.—New York Press.

VARIETY OF THE BIBLE.

Vivid Descriptions, History and Stories of Adventure.

One of the striking things about the Bible as a single piece of literature is the variety of its literary forms, sufficient, indeed, to appeal to the most widely different tastes. There are excellent examples of the short story all through the historical books, such as the absorbingly interesting account of Joseph sold into slavery and afterward elevated to a position next to Pharaoh himself and the intensely realistic story of Paul's shipwreck, which were it not too well written, might be an extract from some book of adventure.

The books of which many of these short stories form a part constitute a body of most intimate and fascinating tribal and national history. Wedged in between two of the historical books we find the story of Ruth, a "prose idyll," as delightful as any of which profane literature can boast. The Book of Esther, though not in form a drama, has a plot of dramatic power, in which Haman, who is raised to triumphant satisfaction at the thought of hanging Mordecai upon the gallows, becomes himself the victim of his own vengeance.

At the end stands that wonderful Apocalypse, which is at once an inspiration and a mystery, full of beauty and rich cadences. Interspersed among all the narratives are delightfully suggestive descriptions, sometimes presenting to us the simple life of the shepherd, again the luxurious surroundings of Ahasuerus' court. It is not strange, therefore, that the Bible makes a strong intellectual appeal to lovers of literature and to men of untrained tastes.—Edgar F. Shannon in Sewanee Review.

Sea Gypsies.

In the archipelago of Mergui, off the coast of lower Burma, live the "sea gypsies." Instead of carts they own covered boats, in which, with their families, dogs, cats, chickens and pets, they float about on the sea and wander from island to island. By day they fish or harpoon turtles or dive for pearl oysters, and at night they seek the shelter of the land. Only in very bad weather do they seek employment on shore. They seem to have solved the housing problem in a manner perfectly satisfactory to themselves and pay no rent or rates to any man.—New York Press.

Nero and Big Noses.

Nero never liked a person with a large nose. He flippantly told the sorrowing relatives of Plautus—whom, it is alleged, he killed—that it was only on inspecting the corpse that he discovered that Plautus had so large a nose and if it had been pointed out before he would have certainly spared his life. "Life with such a nose," coolly added Nero, "would have been ample penance for any crime."

Her Opportunity.

Wife—I had better take that hat for 45 shillings. Husband—But I've only got £2 with me now. I'll have to owe them the odd 5 shillings. Wife—Oh, then, I'll take this one for 3 guineas. Five shillings is too insignificant a sum to owe.—London Telegraph.

The Settlement Worker.

Hoax—I thought you said he was a settlement worker? Joax—He is. Hoax—Why, he tells me he's a bill collector. Joax—Well?—Philadelphia Record.

Must Be Elastic.

John—There is a stiff breeze coming round the corner. Sim—It can't be so very stiff if it can turn the corner.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Any time is the proper time for saying what is just.—Greek Proverb.

HEAT OF THE SUN

Old Sol Has a Strong Pull at the Capitol In Washington.

SWAYS THE MAMMOTH DOME.

On a Hot Day His Torrid Rays Will Drag the Massive Iron Structure Way Out of Plumb—Turns the Same Trick With Washington Monument.

Not many people have any idea as to the enormous amount of heat that the sun sends off into space. The earth gets only a very small portion of it. The head of a pin placed twenty feet away from an electric light gets in proportion to the light on the surrounding walls of a room about what the earth gets of the sun's light and heat radiated into space. Yet that portion the earth does get is great enough to cause great structures to move.

In fact, all stone or metal buildings are constantly changing their positions under the hot rays of the sun. The great dome of the capitol building at Washington is the largest surface of cast iron in the world, and the effect of the continuous heat of a hot summer day can best be appreciated, says Harper's Weekly, when it is known that this mammoth mass really sways back and forth under the scorching rays until the top feather in the cap of the statue of Freedom describes an ellipse the diameter of which on a hot day varies from four to eight inches.

The giant plinth base of the dome, resting on the roof of the old sandstone building, measures 136 feet on a side. The greatest diameter of the round dome is 125 feet, while the whole iron structure is 218 feet high from the old capitol's roof to the base of Freedom on the apex. The cast iron covering this surface is made in thin sheets, offering a good conductor for the heat, which swells even the bolts and beams of the inside before the sun has made its circuit.

The southern side of the dome suffers most from the heat, being exposed longer to the sun, which passes south of the zenith while on its journey from the east to the west. If the metal were exposed to a constant heating the result of the continuation of such expansion as that received on very hot days might prove disastrous, but as it is little if any permanent injury is done, since the iron returns regularly to its normal position as the cool night comes on.

But what seems more remarkable is the fact that marble is also changed in volume so perceptibly by the sunlight that the mammoth shaft of the Washington monument sways back and forth in the sun on a hot day. The outer surface being of hard marble the expansion is much greater than it would be had granite instead of marble been used. On a hot summer day the sharp aluminium apex that crowns the obelisk points to a position at least four inches north of normal, but always returns to its proper position in the cool of the night.

From the extreme top of the monument inside a long pipe line runs perpendicularly to the bottom, leading to a small closet behind the elevator. This contains a long pendulum, whose bob hangs in a vessel of mercury, which prevents its oscillation. Two stationary transits with highly magnifying lenses are focussed directly upon the suspended wire, and through these each quiver of the monument is detected, being magnified on a fine scale graduated to thousandths of an inch.

Every morning at 10 o'clock a statement of this plummet line is taken and reported to the war department and it was by this means that the effect which the sun's rays have on the huge white shaft was discovered. This plumb bob, of course, was placed in the monument for the purpose of detecting any settling it might undergo, and, although the great weight of its mass has pressed the ground for many decades, it has settled only a slight fraction of an inch in one corner.

This seems extraordinary when it is realized that its weight of 81,720 tons rests on a foundation only 126½ feet square and 38 feet deep from a height almost fifteen times that of the depth. The whole rests on the sandy bank of the Potomac river, with the enormous pressure of five tons to the square foot. Not only does the sun's heat sway the big obelisk, but at times when a stiff winter gale was blowing it has been reported as much as two inches out of plumb.

Misery Ahead.

"More tough luck," whispered his wife.

"Well, what now?" he muttered.

"You know Miss Green never sings without her music?"

"Yes."

"Well, she's brought her music."—Detroit Free Press.

The Point of View.

"Say, pa, what is the difference between a visit and a visitation?" Fond Parent—A visit, my boy, is when you go to see your Grandmother Jones, and a visitation is when your Grandmother Jones comes to see us.—New York Times.

These Boys.

Howard—Hasn't Bachelor waited rather long before choosing a wife? Coward—Bless you, no! He's only had a marrying income since he was sixty. —Life.

A proper secrecy is the only mystery of able men. Mystery is the only secrecy of weak and cunning ones.

BRAVE MOTHER STORK.

Her Nest Ablaze, She Will Stay by and Perish With Her Young.

So strong is the mother love developed in the stork and the lark that it amounts to a heroic passion. The stork, which spends the winter in Egypt and the summer in northern and western Europe, likes to build its nest on the top of some steep gable roof. Such a nest is often a real nuisance to man. It is from three to five yards in diameter. It swarms with lizards, frogs, toads and other disagreeable creatures. It becomes in course of time so heavy that it will break the roof if not artificially propped up.

Nevertheless for various superstitious reasons the stork is not only welcome but even courted by the European peasants, and it cannot be denied that the respect with which the bird is regarded is to some extent deserved. If the house takes fire and the young storks happen to be of an age at which they cannot be saved by being taken away from the nest the stork mother does not abandon them. Standing erect in the nest, flapping her wings to waft away the smoke and the flames and crying out now and then, she remains with her young, perishing with them.

The skylark, which builds its nest in the meadows, runs away from it when frightened. She proceeds for four or five yards under the clover and rises perpendicularly in the air, pouring forth her song in its wildest strains in order to divert the intruder's attention. But the peasant boy knows that so long as she remains hanging at the same point in the air he is still four or five yards from the nest, and he uses the direction of her movements and the ring of her song to ascertain the exact spot.

If it chances that the young larks are just about to break through the shell of the eggs, at which time the mother instinct is at its height, it is said that at the very moment when the nest is touched the little bird will actually attack the intruder.—Harper's Weekly.

AN EMPEROR'S TASTE.

It Was the Origin of a Once Common Saying In Austria.

An anecdote which was current of Ferdinand I. of Austria at one time greatly delighted his subjects and gave rise to a common saying. One summer day he was hunting in the Syrian mountains and was overtaken by a violent thunderstorm. He sought refuge in a farmhouse whose occupants were just then at dinner, and his fancy was caught by some smoking dumplings made of coarse flour. He tasted them, liked them and asked for more, and when he got to Vienna, to the horror of the royal cooks, he ordered the same dumplings to be served up daily. The courtiers were scandalized that such a coarse dish should figure on the menu, and even his physicians remonstrated against the use of such food.

The emperor had always been the most pliant of men, but he now showed that he had a will of his own and persisted in gratifying his new fancy. Finally the physicians pretended that it was dangerous to his health to be living on dumplings and insisted on his giving them up. The hitherto docile sovereign stamped his foot and declared that he would never sign another official document if his diet were denied him.

"Emperor I am," he shouted, "and dumplings I will have!"

To prevent a stoppage of the government machinery opposition was withdrawn, and his majesty clung tenaciously to his dumplings. Then the imperial phrase became proverbial, and thereafter when any one insisted on gratifying a silly whim some one was sure to say:

"Emperor I am, and dumplings I will have!"

Profanity and Thought.

Just as soon as a man starts to swearing he stops thinking. Didn't you ever notice it? Well, just notice and see. We don't endeavor to explain it, but it is so. There must be some psychological explanation for it—as, for instance, just at that moment the devil gets into the brain and scrambles it up so it cannot think. It is just like him to do it, for his greatest hold in this world is murky and disheveled thinking.—Ohio State Journal.

Where a Trunk Is a Box.

Don't look for the ticket agent at an English railway station, so that you can buy a ticket to your destination. Look for the "booking agent" and "book" to the point, and, keeping in mind that what you really want is the baggage car, hunt up the "luggage van," and, having found it, remember that if your trunk is in it it is in it as a "box," not as a trunk.—New York Post.

His Excuse.

"You seem like a spiritless creature. I don't believe you've got enough ambition to open your door when Opportunity knocks."

"Don't be too hard on me, ma'am. I ain't never had a door."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

The Indian Runner.

A certain variety of duck, called the Indian Runner, will produce more eggs than a Leghorn hen, according to a writer in the Country Gentleman, and the young ducklings grow four times as fast as chickens.

Put Himself In Bad.

The Spinster—Your face is so familiar to me, professor, I'm sure we've met before. Distinguished Foreigner—Very likely. I vos in dis country ven I vos a young chap.—London Opinion.

ALASKA'S "SILENT CITY."

Wonderful Mirage That Is Said to Have Been Photographed.

One of the best stories of a famous mirage is that told in Alaska concerning the appearance of a city in the sky. This "silent city" is said to have actually been photographed, and, though there are skeptics, enough people claim to have seen it to make the story interesting.

The first account of this "city of silence" was told by a prospector named Willoughby. He was a miner in California and went to Alaska, where he settled in the vicinity of Muir glacier. In fact, it was Willoughby who piloted Professor Muir when he ascended the immense ice field which now bears the scientist's name. Willoughby always told the story of this city which appeared in the sky with much earnestness, and he carried a photograph which he said he took after several visits to the spot whence the vision could be seen.

When Willoughby first went to Alaska natives told him that at certain times of the year when the days were longest and the atmospheric conditions right they saw suspended in the heavens a town with streets, houses and many different kinds of buildings. So impressed was he that he engaged the Indians to take him to the place where the city could be seen, and in their canoes traveled to the spot.

After several attempts Willoughby at length saw this "silent city," as the natives called it. He said that the atmosphere was so clear that mountains many miles away seemed near and that as he gazed the outlines of a city gradually assumed shape, and building after building came to view. He distinctly saw tall office buildings, churches and spires, houses and every indication that the city was inhabited; but, though he saw it several times, he could never detect a human being. A halo of light seemed to cover all. As he gazed the vision faded and gradually receded. So convinced was he that he was looking at the mirage of an actual city that he made records to show that he had been on the exact spot whence the picture in the sky could be seen.

Willoughby's photograph was crude, but enough could be discerned to lead persons to assert that it was a view of Bristol, England, many thousand miles away. Willoughby told his story in 1888 or thereabouts. Since then several persons have said that they saw the mirage. In every instance the mirage was surrounded by a halo of light which poured a soft glow on roof and walls.—New York Sun.

Jenny Lind Hated Us.

Jenny Lind hated the Americans. She abhorred the very name of Barnum, who, she said, "exhibited me just as he did the big giant or any other of his monstrosities."

"But," said I, "you must not forget how you were idolized and appreciated in America. Even as a child I can remember how they worshiped Jenny Lind."

"Worshiped or not," she answered sharply, "I was nothing more than a show in a showman's hands. I can never forget that."—From "The Courts of Memory," by Mme. Lindenerone.

Wholesale Favors.

The young man entered the president's office and stood first on one foot and then on the other. He dropped his hat, handkerchief and umbrella. Altogether he was in a highly developed state of nervousness.

"Well, well!" said the employer. "Out with it!"

"I have come, sir," said the young man, and then began to stammer.

"Well, speak up! Have you come to ask for the hand of my daughter or a raise in salary?"

"If you please, sir," stammered the young man, "it's both."—Exchange.

Dead or Alive.

Two Irishmen were working on the roof of a building one day when one made a misstep and fell to the ground. The other leaned over and called, "Are yez dead or alive, Mike?"

"Oi'm alive," said Mike feebly.

"Sure you're such a liar Oi don't know whether to belave yez or not."

"Well, then, Oi must be dead," said Mike, "for yez would never dare to call me a liar if Oi wor aloive."—Philadelphia Record.

Simply a Bad Actor.

The Lady—How did you come to be thrown out of employment? The Thespian—'Tis a sad but soon told tale, madam. An ape-like audience threw ancient eggs at mub; a mangy and mercenary manger threw mub down a flight of stairs; a dull witted doorman threw mub out into the street, and a twice cursed taxicab threw mub twenty feet. Thus it was, lady.—Judge.

Evolution.

"Of course you believe in evolution?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Cumrox. "My own recollections of early days in the west remind me that many a sixty horsepower limousine can trace its financial ancestry back to a 'prairie schooner.'"—Washington Star.

The Main Difference.

"What is the real difference between mushrooms and toadstools?"

"One is a feast and the other is a funeral."—Baltimore American.

Merely Fiction.

Minerva—Isn't it strange, mother, that all the heroines in novels marry poor men? Mater—Yes, my dear, but that is fiction.—Judge.

Every being that can live can do something. This let him do.—Carlyle.